## *Amendments*

*In the Claims:*

Please cancel claim 1 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please add the following claims:

2.    A computer-implemented method for facilitating stages of a research and development project, comprising the steps of:

(1)    accessing a tool box comprising a plurality of tools wherein each of said tools is associated with one or more tasks of the stages of the research and development project;

(2)    selecting a task associated with one of the stages of the research and development project;

(3)    invoking a tool from said tool box applicable to said selected task; and

(4)    performing said selected task using said invoked tool.

3.    The method of claim 2, wherein step (3) comprises at least one of the steps of:

invoking a tool for generating a topographic map;

invoking a tool for generating a top company table;

invoking  a tool for generating a top inventor table;

invoking a tool for generating an inventors by company table;

invoking a tool for generating a features grouping chart;

invoking a tool for generating a technology classification;

invoking a tool for generating a SIC classification;

invoking a tool for generating a patent count/year chart;

invoking a tool for generating an application count/year report;

invoking a tool for generating a technology by company map;

invoking a tool for generating a patent citation tree;

invoking a tool for generating a nested patent citation tree;

invoking a tool for generating a product/patent/revenue table;

invoking a tool for generating a patent/months to issue report; and

invoking a tool for generating document annotation.


4.    The method of claim 2, wherein one of the stages is an idea stage, and said selected task is related to searching a group of patents, and wherein said invoked tool generates a map, wherein said map displays patent information that identifies related materials, processes, and uses to consider when expanding and refining an idea.


5.    The method of claim 2, wherein one of the stages is an idea stage, and said selected task is related to searching a group of patents, and wherein said invoked tool generates a top company table, wherein said top company table provides a patent count report of assignees involved in areas related to an idea of a user company.


6.    The method of claim 2, wherein one of the stages is an idea stage, and said selected task is related to searching a group of patents, and wherein said invoked tool generates a top inventor table, wherein said top inventor table provides a patent count report of inventors that are involved in areas related to an idea of a user company.


7.    The method of claim 2, wherein one of the stages is a preliminary assessment stage, and said selected task is related to searching a group of patents, dividing said group into subgroups according to inventor, and dividing said subgroups according to assignee, and wherein said invoked tool generates an inventors by company table, wherein said inventors by company table identifies those who have worked in an area pertaining to an idea of a user company.

8. The method of claim 2, wherein one of the stages is a preliminary assessment stage, and said selected task is related to searching a group of company documents, and wherein said invoked tool generates a features grouping chart, wherein said chart displays product feature sets in a project.

9. The method of claim 2, wherein one of the stages is an idea stage, and said selected task is related to searching a group of patents and dividing said group into subgroups according to technology classification, and wherein said invoked tool generates a technology classification, wherein said technology classification provides to a user information pertaining to other technologies that could be used to build upon an initial concept.

10. The method of claim 2, wherein one of the stages is a preliminary assessment stage, and said selected task is related to searching a group of patents, dividing said group into subgroups according to technology classification, and mapping said technology classification to its related SIC classification, and wherein said invoked tool generates a SIC classification, wherein said SIC classification provides information to a user to locate markets which should be assessed.

11. The method of claim 2, wherein one of the stages is an idea stage, and said selected task is related to searching a group of patents, and wherein said invoked tool generates a patent count per year chart, wherein said chart provides information pertaining to velocity and intensity of activity in a market related to an idea..

12. The method of claim 2, wherein one of the stages is an idea stage, and said selected task is related to searching a group of patents, dividing said group into subgroups according to patent classification, and dividing said subgroups according to assignee, and wherein said invoked tool generates a technology by company map, wherein said map informs a user as to which competitors have shown major effort in areas related to an idea.

13.    The method of claim 2, wherein one of the stages is a development stage, and said selected task is related to searching a group of patents and performing a forward citation on each of said patents to create a patent citation tree, and wherein said invoked tool generates a patent citation tree, wherein said patent citation tree provides information to a user pertaining to key prior art to acquire during said development stage for freedom to practice.

14.    The method of claim 2, wherein one of the stages is an idea stage, and said selected task is related to searching a group of patents and performing a specified number of forward citations on each of said patents to create a nested patent citation tree, and wherein said invoked tool generates a nested patent citation tree, wherein said nested patent citation tree allows a user to promote an idea as distinct from other work in a related market.

15.    The method of claim 2, wherein one of the stages is a portfolio stage, and said selected task is related to searching a group of patents and documents and sorting said group according to product attributes, and wherein said invoked tool generates a product/patent/revenue table, wherein said table distinguishes new features of a proposed project from features of previously existing technology.

16.    The method of claim 2, wherein one of the stages is a scale-up stage, and said selected task is related to searching a group of patents, sorting said group by a period of time field, and performing calculations relating to said field, and wherein said invoked tool generates a patent/months to issue chart, wherein said chart shows high, low, and average time patents of a competitor remain hidden from a user's view.

17.    The method of claim 2, wherein one of the stages is an idea stage, and said selected task is related to searching a group of patents and documents and annotating said patents and documents, and wherein said invoked tool generates document annotation, wherein said document annotation creates a document trail of an invention while a related idea is researched, thereby providing an early priority date.

18.    A computer-implemented method for facilitating stages of a research and development project, comprising the steps of:

(1)    accessing a tool box comprising a plurality of tools wherein each of said tools is associated with one or more tasks of the stages of the research and development project;

(2)    selecting a task associated with one of the stages of the research and development project, said task comprising at least one of the tasks of:

searching a group of patents;

searching a group of company documents;

searching a group of patents and dividing said group into subgroups according to technology classification;

searching a group of patents, dividing said group into subgroups according to inventor, and dividing said subgroups according to assignee;

searching a group of patents, dividing said group into subgroups according to technology classification, and mapping said technology classification to its related SIC classification;

searching a group of patents and performing a forward citation on each of said patents to create a patent citation tree;

searching a group of patents and performing a specified number of forward citations on each of said patents to create a nested patent citation tree;

searching a group of patents, dividing said group into subgroups according to patent classification, and dividing said subgroups according to assignee;

searching a group of patents and documents and sorting said group according to product attributes;

searching a group of patents, sorting said group by a period of time field, and performing calculations relating to said field; and

searching a group of patents and documents and annotating said patents and documents;

(3)    invoking a tool from said tool box applicable to said selected

task; and

    (4)    performing said selected task using said invoked tool.

    19.    A computer-implemented system for facilitating stages of a research and development project, comprising:

    (1)    a computer based tool box comprising a plurality of tools wherein each of said tools is associated with one or more tasks of the stages of the research and development project;

    (2)    means for invoking a tool from said tool box to perform a selected one of said tasks; and

    (3)    means for performing said selected task using said invoked tool.

    20.    The system of claim 19, wherein said tool box comprises at least one of:

a tool for generating a topographic map;

a tool for generating a top company table;

a tool for generating a top inventor table;

a tool for generating an inventors by company table;

a tool for generating a features grouping chart;

a tool for generating a technology classification;

a tool for generating a SIC classification;

a tool for generating a patent count/year chart;

a tool for generating an application count/year report;

a tool for generating a technology by company map;

a tool for generating a patent citation tree;

a tool for generating a nested patent citation tree;

a tool for generating a product/patent/revenue table;

a tool for generating a patent/months to issue report; and

a tool for generating document annotation.

21.     The system of claim 19, wherein one of the stages is an idea stage, and said selected task is related to searching a group of patents, and wherein said invoked tool generates a map, wherein said map displays patent information that identifies related materials, processes, and uses to consider when expanding and refining an idea.

22.     The system of claim 19, wherein one of the stages is an idea stage, and said selected task is related to searching a group of patents, and wherein said invoked tool generates a top company table, wherein said top company table provides a patent count report of assignees involved in areas related to an idea of a user company.

23.     The system of claim 19, wherein one of the stages is an idea stage, and said selected task is related to searching a group of patents, and wherein said invoked tool generates a top inventor table, wherein said top inventor table provides a patent count report of inventors that are involved in areas related to an idea of a user company.

24.     The system of claim 19, wherein one of the stages is a preliminary assessment stage, and said selected task is related to searching a group of patents, dividing said group into subgroups according to inventor, and dividing said subgroups according to assignee, and wherein said invoked tool generates an inventors by company table, wherein said inventors by company table identifies those who have worked in an area pertaining to an idea of a user company.

25.     The system of claim 19, wherein one of the stages is a preliminary assessment stage, and said selected task is related to searching a group of company documents, and wherein said invoked tool generates a features grouping chart, wherein said chart displays product feature sets in a project.

26.     The system of claim 19, wherein one of the stages is an idea stage, and said selected task is related to searching a group of patents and dividing said group into subgroups according to technology classification, and wherein said invoked tool generates a technology

classification, wherein said technology classification provides to a user information pertaining to other technologies that could be used to build upon an initial concept.

27.     The system of claim 19, wherein one of the stages is a preliminary assessment stage, and said selected task is related to searching a group of patents, dividing said group into subgroups according to technology classification, and mapping said technology classification to its related SIC classification, and wherein said invoked tool generates a SIC classification, wherein said SIC classification provides information to a user to locate markets which should be assessed.

28.     The system of claim 19, wherein one of the stages is an idea stage, and said selected task is related to searching a group of patents, and wherein said invoked tool generates a patent count per year chart, wherein said chart provides information pertaining to velocity and intensity of activity in a market related to an idea..

29.     The system of claim 19, wherein one of the stages is an idea stage, and said selected task is related to searching a group of patents, dividing said group into subgroups according to patent classification, and dividing said subgroups according to assignee, and wherein said invoked tool generates a technology by company map, wherein said map informs a user as to which competitors have shown major effort in areas related to an idea.

30.     The system of claim 19, wherein one of the stages is a development stage, and said selected task is related to searching a group of patents and performing a forward citation on each of said patents to create a patent citation tree, and wherein said invoked tool generates a patent citation tree, wherein said patent citation tree provides information to a user pertaining to what key prior art to acquire during said development stage for freedom to practice.

31.     The system of claim 19, wherein one of the stages is an idea stage, and said one or more tasks is related to searching a group of patents and performing a specified number of

forward citations on each of said patents to create a nested patent citation tree, and wherein said invoked tool generates a nested patent citation tree, wherein said nested patent citation tree allows a user to promote an idea as distinct from other work in a related market.

32.     The system of claim 19, wherein one of the stages is a portfolio stage, and said selected task is related to searching a group of patents and documents and sorting said group according to product attributes, and wherein said invoked tool generates a product/patent/revenue table, wherein said table distinguishes new features of a proposed project from features of previously existing technology.

33.     The system of claim 19, wherein one of the stages is a scale-up stage, and said selected task is related to searching a group of patents, sorting said group by a period of time field, and performing calculations relating to said field, and wherein said invoked tool generates a patent/months to issue chart, wherein said chart shows high, low, and average time patents of a competitor remain hidden from a user's view.

34.     The system of claim 19, wherein one of the stages is an idea stage, and said selected task is related to searching a group of patents and documents and annotating said patents and documents, and wherein said invoked tool generates document annotation, wherein said document annotation creates a document trail of an invention while a related idea is researched, thereby providing an early priority date.